

## Shaping My Feminist Life: a Memoir

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which signaled the end of many prison newspapers. Ultimately, as the author acknowledges in his introduction, the study suffers from several limitations: broader issues affecting prison publication are noted only in passing, and publications of women and minority prisoners fail to appear at all. While those are serious limitations, *Jailhouse Journalism* is nonetheless an interesting collective biography of prison journalists.

*Shaping My Feminist Life: A Memoir*, by Kathleen C. Ridder, with foreword by Jill Kerr Conway. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1998. xx, 202 pp. Illustrations. \$24.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY LOUISE ROSENFELD NOUN, DES MOINES

Kathleen Culman Ridder, born in 1923 in New York City, has been married for 55 years to Robert Ridder, son of the former owner of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. She characterizes herself as a wealthy, upper-class, middle-of-the-road Republican and feminist. She is a Catholic who believes in freedom of reproductive choice. Ridder traces her journey to feminism from her days as a Junior League volunteer to numerous civic improvement and educational projects, and membership on the board of the St. Paul Urban League. When the women's movement emerged in the 1960s, Ridder slowly came to realize the social and economic difficulties faced by other women, although personally she had never felt oppressed. Her main interest has been in promoting the women's athletic program at the University of Minnesota, to which she and her husband have donated substantial funds for scholarships. Ridder made a brief attempt to liberalize the Roman Catholic church, but soon came to realize that this was a hopeless task, best left to time to alter the church's attitude toward women.

Ridder mentions the many women and men she worked with in numerous organizations without giving in-depth descriptions of either her coworkers or the operation of their programs. This limits the interest of non-Minnesotans in her activities. The reader's interest is also distracted by numerous references to organizations by their initials or acronyms. A list of abbreviations along with the organizations to which they refer would have been helpful.

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